

CHAPTER 4

‘THE CHALLENGE’

‘SCREECH’HHHHHHH’.....

A yellow school bus came to a hard wheel ‘GRA’ ‘GRA’ ‘GRINDING’ halt- following a quick right hand turn, to scoop up the children and cart them off to school to learn. The school bus door swung open with a swooshing swing, exposing the bright smile of Mya- who appeared ready to sing. Several other children behind her did mope, it was the first day of school blues and some of them just could not cope.

“**Good Morning lil’ Diva!How was your summer break?**”, greeted the woman behind the wheel with the large ‘DA’ ‘DA’ ‘DANGLING’ gold earrings.

“**IT WAS SUPER SUPER FUN!I did a whole lot of swimming and bike riding!....**”, replied Mya- while holding up the line. “.....**OH- and I went to Fun Land with my family- and- and**”. ‘CA’ ‘CA’ ‘COUGH’- coughed the impatient boy to Mya’s rear. He wanted her to move it- he did!

Mya swiftly spun her head around toward the boy while ‘SMA’ ‘SMA’ ‘SMACKING’ her lips and ‘RA’ ‘RA’ ‘ROLLING’ her eyes. She then turned back to face the bus driver, who ‘SMA’ ‘SMA’ ‘SMACKED’ her lips and ‘RA’ ‘RA’ ‘ROLLED’ her eyes toowith- **ATTITUDE!**

“**Like I was saying Miss Jackson.....**”, continued Mya- “.....**I had so much fun**”.

“**I bet you didEW- I like that gold chain your wearing girlfriend!That’s- FIRE!**”, chimed Miss Jackson- as she eyed the shiny circular charm that was encrusted with MANY tiny fake diamonds. The charm hung all the way down to Mya’s stomach from a long thin gold-plated rope chain.

“**THANKS!And look!IT SPINS!.....**”, she replied- as she gave the charm a turn of the finger, causing it to ‘SPA’ ‘SPA’ ‘SPIN’ and ‘SHA’ ‘SHA’ ‘SHINE’. “.....**Coolio- huh!My dad bought it for me as a gift because he really loves me**”

“**You betta watch out for dem haters girl Cause they’ll definitely be hatin’ on that**”, warned Miss Jackson.

“**I will!**”, tooted Mya- before she continued on into the bus with her Kimby Doll lunchbox and matching backpack. She plopped down into a seat next to a blond-haired girl with two long ponytails, of whom she immediately engaged in an animated conversation with lots of ‘WA’ ‘WA’ ‘WAIVING’ hands and rotating necks. It was *GIRL TALK*- it was!

After all children had entered the bus and found themselves a seat- Miss Jackson shut the door, checked her mirrors and placed her foot on the gas pedal preparing to swervewhen suddenly! A hand ‘TA’ ‘TA’ ‘TAPPED’ upon the door!

Miss Jackson was shocked- *OH BOY*- was she ever, when she spotted Hoagie ‘HUH’ ‘HUH’ ‘HUFFING’ and ‘PUH’ ‘PUH’ ‘PUFFING’ outside of the door’- she pulled upon the lever. The door swung open in order to let, Hoagie board the bus, with a head covered in beads of sweat.

“There he is!The Big Dog!I almost left ya baby- slap me five!”, she chimed- while holding up her right hand, which had unnecessarily long red nails. Hoagie swiftly **‘SLAPPED’** her a high-five as he passed her by.

“YO- HOAGSTER!BACK HERE!”, shouted a skinny girl wearing a backwards ball cap, who stood **‘WA’ ‘WA’ ‘WAIVING’** him to the back of the bus. He frowned hard while heading toward the back of the bus as he passed by Mya who had all her little friends enchanted with his coolio **‘SPA’ ‘SPA’ ‘SPINNING’** chain. She was loving all the attention- she was!

“What’d up Hoag’ster!Gim’me some yo!”, sang out the girl- with her right fist extended out. Hoagie rammed fists with the girl, then quickly took the isle seat next to her. **“.....YO- why are you sweating like a pig Gee?”**.

“Have you ever had a cup of coffee Cind?”, asked Hoagie.

“NO WAY- YUCK!I hate that junk!it tastes like tire juice”, wailed Cindy.

“You-you-you- you have ta give it a chanceIt’s liquid energy!I did a lap around the block before the bus came and I feel- GREAT! IT’S AMAZING!”, he exclaimed.

“Yeah-yeah- whateverAye yo- where’s this super coolio chain that you said you would be rockin’ today?”.

“My sister’s wearing it”

“YO!What’s she doing with your bling?”

“It was either let the snitch wear my chain for two days, or risk missing out on the Super Dog movieZONKERS!Is it burning up in here- or is it just me?You could roast a turkey in here!I think Miss Jackson left the heater on againLet’s change seats- I need some cool air”, he wailed.

“It’s just you”, she replied- as Hoagie leapt to his feet and switched seats with her. He swiftly pulled open the window and stuck his head out of it like a dog. He felt instant relief as the cool winds **‘BA’ ‘BA’ ‘BLEW’** into his face.

“HEY- WHAT YOU GOT IN THE BACKPACK FAT BOY!LET ME GUESS- TWO PIGS AND AN ELEPHANT BURGER WITH CHEESE! AND I BET HE GOT A DIET COLA TO DRINK WITH IT!GOTTA WATCH THOSE CALORIES- RIGHT!”, laughed a tall slender boy with short black wavy hair, who sat two seats ahead of them wearing dark shades. A short red-headed boy with freckles, sat next to him laughing loudly like a hyena- along with a few other kids. As the kids continued to laugh at his expense, Hoagie sunk down **‘LA’ ‘LA’ ‘LOW’** into his seat.

“NO LOUIS!HE’S GOT A GIANT BONE IN THERE SO WE CAN TOSS IT OVER THE FENCE TO YOUR MOMS AT LUNCH!”, snapped back Cindy- as she leapt to Hoagie’s defense, receiving an equal amount of laughs from their peers.

“OH YEAH!WELL YOUR SKINNIER THAN A TWIG- UGLY- AND YOUR HEAD IS TOO BIG FOR THAT LITTLE BITTY HAT!”, dissed Louis.

“WELL YOU STINK LIKE GARBAGE- AND YOUR EARS ARE BIGGER THAN A VAMPIRE BAT!”, she snapped back.

“WELL YOU LOOK LIKE A DROOLING RETARD- WITH A BODY MADE OF NOODLES”, dissed Louis.

“WELL YOUR FEET STINK LIKE CORN CHIPS- AND YOUR FACE LOOKS LIKE THE BUTT OF A POODLE!”, she snapped back. The bus erupted with more *‘LA’ ‘LA’ ‘LAUGHING’* than a late night comedy club- it did!

“THAT’S IT!YOU AND YOUR PLEASANTLY PLUMP BUDDY ARE GOING ON THE LIST!”, wailed out Louis- causing the kids all around to belt out a lot of *‘EW’s* and *‘AH’s*.

It was Louis’s official list of uncool kids who walked the hall’s of Saint Mary’s Private School, and Louis himself was the self-appointed high minister of swag and cool. To hang with the cool kids was Hoagie’s fourth grade wish, but thanks to Cindy’s outbursts- his chances had disappeared with a diss. Being on the list was like having the plague, for all of the other certified cool kids would avoid you like a live hand grenade. Louis could dish it- but he just could not take it- he couldn’t!

“YO- WE DON’T CARE ABOUT YOUR STUPID LIST FOR JERKS!YOU’RE JUST MAD BECAUSE I’M A GIRL AND I’M A THOUSAND TIMES BETTER THAN YOU AT EVERYTHING!ME AND MY BOY HOAG HERE GOT MUCHO CHARACTER AND THAT’S SOMETHING THAT YOU CAN’T GET FROM A STUPID PAIR OF SHADES!JUST FACE IT- WE’RE COOLER THAN YOU “, boomed Cindy- not feeling Hoagie *‘TA’ ‘TA’ ‘TUGGING’* on her sweater. He wanted her to- *SHUT UP-* he did!

Once again the bus erupted with a whole lot of *‘EW’s* and *‘AH’s-* it did! **“Even sports?”**, asked a boy within the area.

“Even sports!”, she confidently replied.

“WHAT- PLEASE!One- I don’t need any stupid character because I’m super coolio! And two- I’m the best athlete at Saint Mary’s and everybody knows it!EVERYBODY!”, tooted Louis in a most royal and arrogant tone- as he whipped out his hair brush.

“YO- well you’ve got real competition this year, me and my boy Hoag ran our side of the playground last year!”, she chimed- while holding out her right hand middle and index fingers like a pair of open scissors.

“Well that sounds like a bet to me!”, proposed Louis- as he *‘BRA’ ‘BRA’ ‘BRUSHED’* his hair forward in slow strokes.

“TELL HIM HOAG!TELL HIM HOW GOOD WE ARE!”, she rallied- while elbowing Hoagie’s right arm for support. Hoagie responded to Cindy’s words by *‘SA’ ‘SA’ ‘SINKING’* within his seat- lower than a Caribbean limbo champion. He did not wish to be enemies with the coolest kid at school; but Cindy on the other hand was another story. She simply did not care- she didn’t!

“Good- good- that’s what I like ta hearSince you think your better than me- I guess we can make a little BET!How about a game of kickballMe and Stew’s team, against you and the Hamburglar’s team Losers buy the winners soda and chips fro the rest of the month!”, proposed Louis.

With this challenge made- Cindy gazed down upon Hoagie for confirmation, wanting his approval to the terms of the bet. **“Don’t do it!Please don’t!”**, begged Hoagie in a pleading whisper- with the look of a frightened squirrel.

“But we can take ‘em Gee!We got mad skills to pay the bills yo!With your expert pitching skills and my super bad feet- we can’t lose!”, exclaimed Cindy- with a gleam of determination within her little slanted eyes.

“Please don’t!”, begged Hoagie.

“All right yoBut we’re not backing down from no more challenges Hoag!Peeps gone be lookin’ at us like straight country fried chickens with a side of biscuits!”, stressed Cindy- with a look of disappointment.

“SoWhat’s it gonna be?”, questioned Louis.

“No betWe got better things to do with our time than to prove ourselves to a bunch of losers”, she replied.

“BAWK- BAWK- BAWK!”, chanted Stuart- Louis’s red-headed sidekick as he **‘FA’ ‘FA’ ‘FLAPPED’** his arms like a chicken with his neck held high and his head **‘JA’ ‘JA’ ‘JERKING’** and kicking. Cindy’s fist clenched really really tight and her face turned cherry red! She was furious- she was!

Upon hearing the call of the chicken the entire school bus readily joined in. Everyone from the first to the sixth graders, even all their so-called friends. Mya and her little pony-tailed friend stopped their girl talk and joined in on the call too. The bus became a loud chicken coup- it did!

[Suddenly] Cindy leapt up from her seat with scissor fingers aimed at Louis and his sidekick!

“IT’S ON FOOLIOS!NOBODY CALLS US CHICKENS YO!”, she hollered out. Hoagie’s shocked eyes opened wider than the windows on a haunted house- they did!

“GOOD- well it’s a bet then!Your finally putting your money where your chopsticks go KICKBALL FIELD!LUNCH!TEN-ON-TEN!You don’t show- you automatically lose the bet”, informed Louis.

“OH- We’ll be there!And we’re gonna win!”, she vowed- while **‘WA’ ‘WA’ ‘WAIVING’** scissor fingers with both hands. Louis **‘SLAP’ ‘SLAPPED’** Stuart a double high-five, before they **‘WA’ ‘WA’ ‘WIGGLED’** their fingers together. It was the official cool kid celebration- it was!

“Why’d you do it Cind?Why’yyy?”, questioned Hoagie- as she sat back down.

“They was callin’ us chickens Bro”, she replied.

“They’re gonna destroy us Cind!I don’t have any money to just throw away!The Super Dog movie comes out next week- and I need ALL my money!”, he wailed out- highly upset with her impulsive decision. He almost cried- he did!

“Yo- you worry too much Hoag’sterWe’re not going to lose GeeJust bring your A-game and we’ll crush those losers”, assured Cindy- without the faintest sign of worry.

Hoagie cupped his face within his hands and looked high toward the heavens with a stomach **‘BU’ ‘BU’ ‘BUBBLING’** with fear. He silently prayed; because it was either that- or embarrass himself with tears. He prayed for a heavenly miracle of an epic proportion- or for the school to outlaw kickball**FOREVER!** Little did he know, that- ONE- was destined to happen- it was!